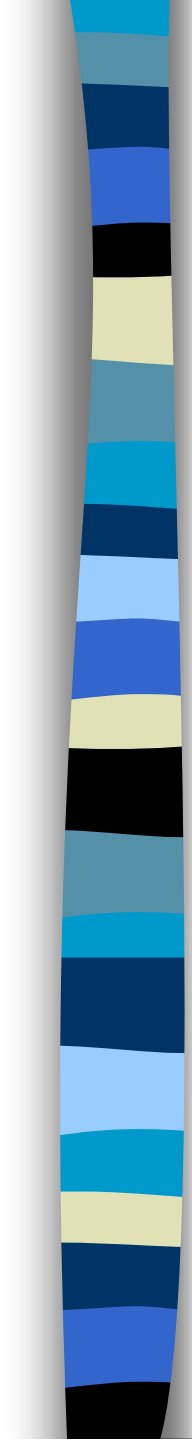


Outreach and Partnerships: How to Develop Strong Relationships with Community Partners



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“The most important task
we face
is learning to think
in new ways”

-Gregory Bateson
British Scientist & Author



Today's objectives

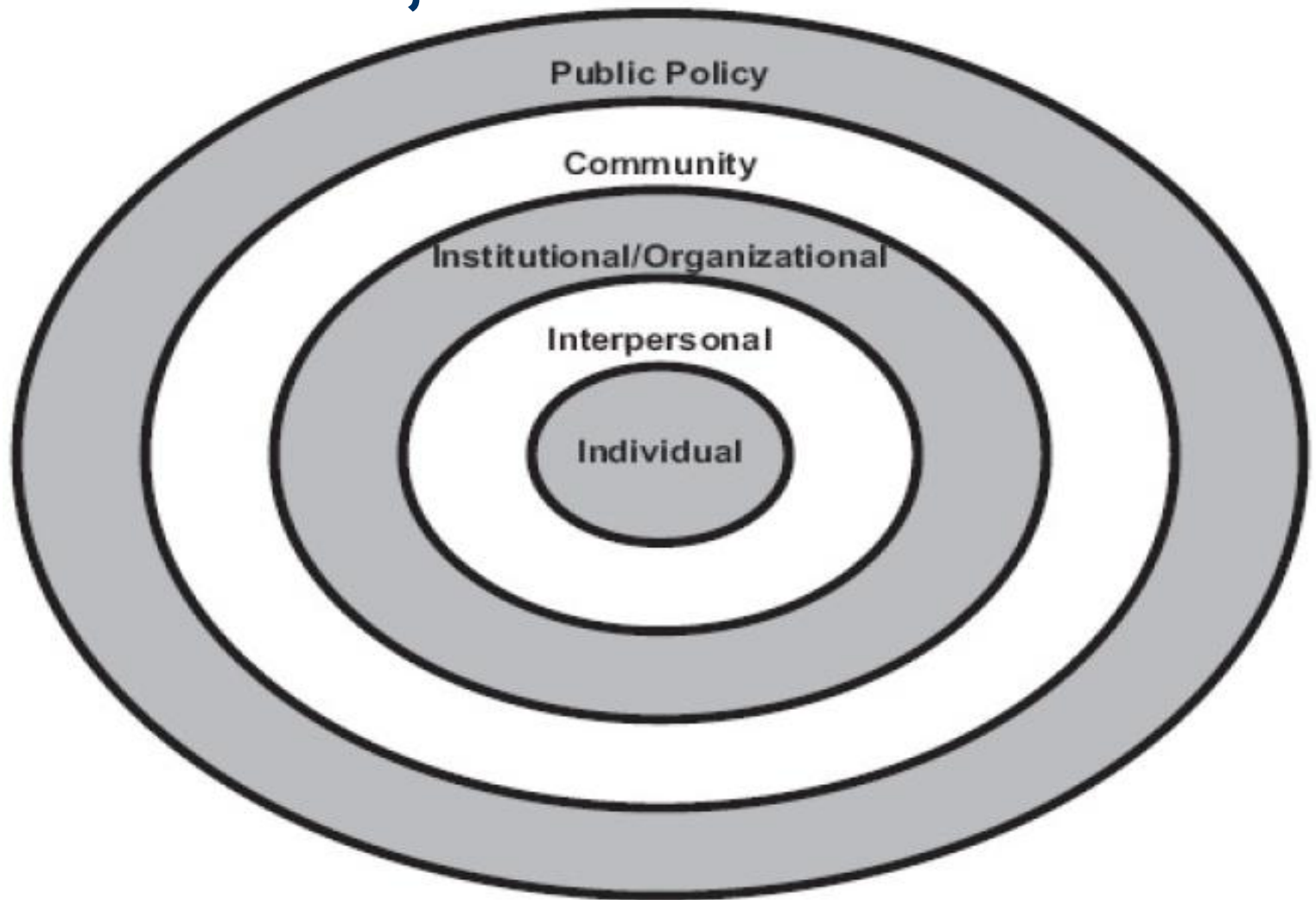
- What does “partnership” mean?
- How do we support partnerships?
 - Our organizations
 - Our programs
 - Our personal philosophies, knowledge and skills – language & approach
- Where do we begin?

Sometimes it feels like...



Why partner?

Health is not just an individual matter...



McElroy KR, Bibeau D, Steckler A, Glanz . An ecological perspective on health promotion programs. *Health Education Quarterly* 15:351-377, 1988.



Partnership means...

1. participation; association; joint interest
2. an association of persons joined

A **partner** is:

1. person **who shares** or is associated with another in some action or endeavor; sharer; associate
2. a person associated with another or a **contributor** sharing its risks and benefits/profits
3. A player on the same side or team as another



Characteristics of Partnerships

- Formal & informal
 - Sanctioned, mandated, legal - usually funded in some way
 - Coalitions or collectives for common goal
- Long-term or Short term
- General or topic specific
- Organization to community
 - Oriented, Placed, Based, Engaged



Authentic Partnerships – how do you know?

- All partners have power
- All partners have mission statements
- A common goal larger than any one partner
- Community partners are grounded in the community
- Institutional partners are committed to working with community partners

Labonte R. (1997) Community, Community Development and the Forming of Authentic Partnerships: Some Critical Reflections. Chapter in Community Organizing & Community Building for Health. Minkler M ed. Rutgers University Press New Brunswick NJ.



Authentic Partnerships – continued

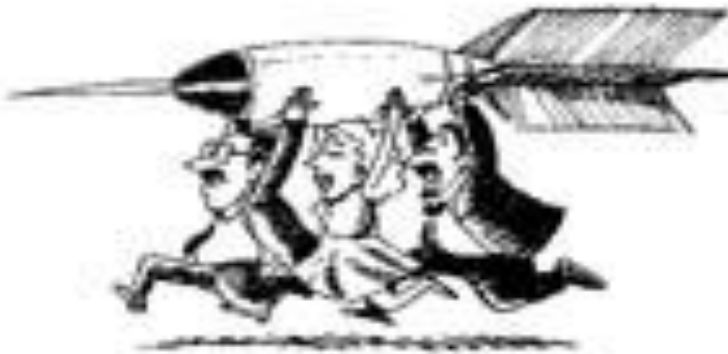
- Objectives and expectations are clear
- Written agreements exist (e.g., MOA)
- Community partners' contributions are clear & are not in place to establish “buy-in”
- Values are clear (e.g., respect, sensitivity of all partners)
- Expectations are clear



Partnerships include:

- An articulated vision
- Strategic outreach and membership development
- Ground rules
- Structure and operating procedures
- New modes of communication
- Leadership opportunities for everyone
- Activities that are culturally sensitive

How our organizations influence partnerships





How Organizational Culture influences Community Engagement



Requires sincere self assessment of:

- a. Formal Policies, Mission, Vision & Values
- b. Standard operating procedures
- c. Trainings of staff & orientation
 - a. People brought into organization – what skills are being sought
 - b. Continuing education & professional development
 - c. Reinforcing factors – awards, promotion



Organizational Characteristics

- Is “partnership” in the mission?
- Is it mentioned in the values?
- Operating procedures:
 - Who represents the organization in partnerships?
 - Who decides in which partnerships the organization may engage?



Example Mission Statement



Roles for Service Providers in Partnerships

- The catalyst
- The consultant
- The collaborator



Individual Language – divides or brings us together?

What is said...

- We can help you
- Here's what you need to do
- This will improve your health
- If you do this, you will feel better
- We want to improve services

What is heard...

- We want you to do something for us
- We know what's best for you
- We know more than you do
- Just do what we tell you to do
- We want to apply for more funding



Language – divides or brings us together?

What is said...

- Outreach “to”
- Participation
- Buy-in
- Ownership
- Expert
- Provider

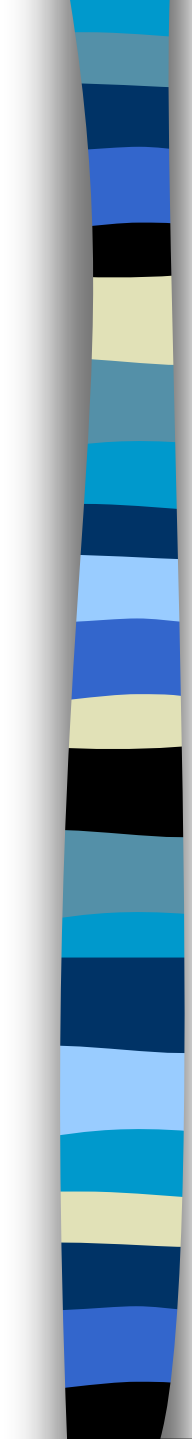
Alternatives...

- ◆ Collaboration “with”
- ◆ Engagement
- ◆ Consensus
- ◆ Shared
- ◆ Partner
- ◆ Co-creator



Challenges of partnership

- Takes time – must have organizational leadership endorsement
- Labor intensive
- Process oriented
- Different skill set
- Requires the addition of new measures of success
- Its not easy! But the payoff is great for all partners.



The Principles of Community Engagement



Principles of Community Engagement

- Community engagement is an art and science
- Move from “us” to “we” orientation
- Community first
 - Define community broadly
 - Multiple memberships of community members
 - Cast a wide net for partners
 - Family focus – inclusively
 - Policy involvement
 - Community “normalization” of issues



Where do we start?

- Take time to explore perceptions – history
- Start a dialogue about community needs & wants
- Look at current services critically & identify gaps – see opportunities
- Hold and participate in community events – be present
- Identify community leaders to start dialogue
- Use media – think outside the box
- Identify barriers including historical mistakes
- Reward & celebrate



Practical Approach

- Build capacity simultaneously
 - Provide organization orientation & training for community members
 - Ask community members to provide orientation to their communities



How to Evaluate and Overcome Barriers of Non-participation



Be willing to Ask & Listen

- Ask how is the community voice integrated into strategies?
 - Logistics - who, what, where, when, how
 - Philosophy - both sides compromise, communities want to be heard, communities are forgiving, willing to compromise
- Ask what do non-participants tell you?
 - Issues of recruitment vs. retention – understand the differences



Barriers leading to non-participation

1. Organizational approach to inclusion, diversity, openness
2. History & how it influences the present
3. Individual experiences and perceptions

How to address barriers:

- Identify 1-3 above via partners
- Move forward through active participation & giving a voice to the community
- Have a strategy to develop action plan after insights & experiences are shared



How Community Engagement links to Quality Improvement Strategies



Quality Improvement

- *Effectiveness* - Paradigm shift for community as well as professionals means more effective approach
 - building capacity with the community to be engaged – knowledge skills may not be present in the community so practitioners and community learn together
- *Reach* -Non-traditional solutions require organizational shift,
 - think outside the box, try new things to reach out in new ways & reach new people
- *Shared Responsibility* –professionals don't have all the answers or even all of the questions
 - community perspectives and interpretations contribute to greater understanding of contributing factors and identifying solutions



Quality Improvement- continued

- *Relevance* - Collaborate on setting objectives, identifying resources, strategies & goals increases buy-in from community and likelihood community members will participate
- *Broaden Success* - Additional measures of success (e.g., new people at the table) builds ownership and trust & increases communication
- *Celebrate!* – Recognition is important for both staff and community partners – leads to continued growth and participation



How Community Engagement can add Additional Resources to your Service Offerings



Community Engagement means...

- Collective definition of the problems & ownership of the solutions
 - reduces duplication of efforts, maximizes existing resources
- Team approach to implementation
 - everyone has a role – expands labor force, range of expertise, effectiveness & relevance of solutions
- Building on all strengths and assets
 - community brings assets (e.g., communication channels, facilities, formal & informal networks etc.)



Charge for the future...

Look around,
see where you stand,
understand what you have to offer,
really see and listen to the community,
and, in partnership,
explore how **together** you can make a
difference



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